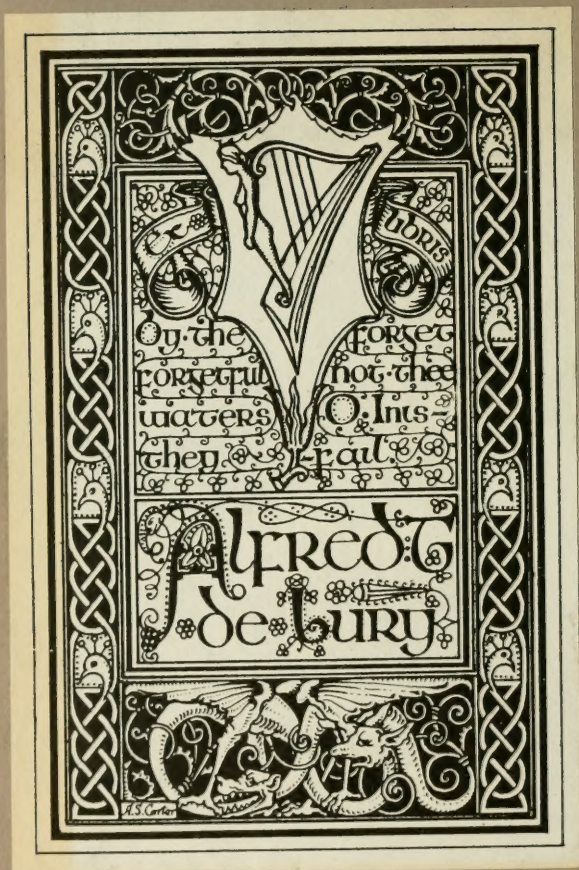


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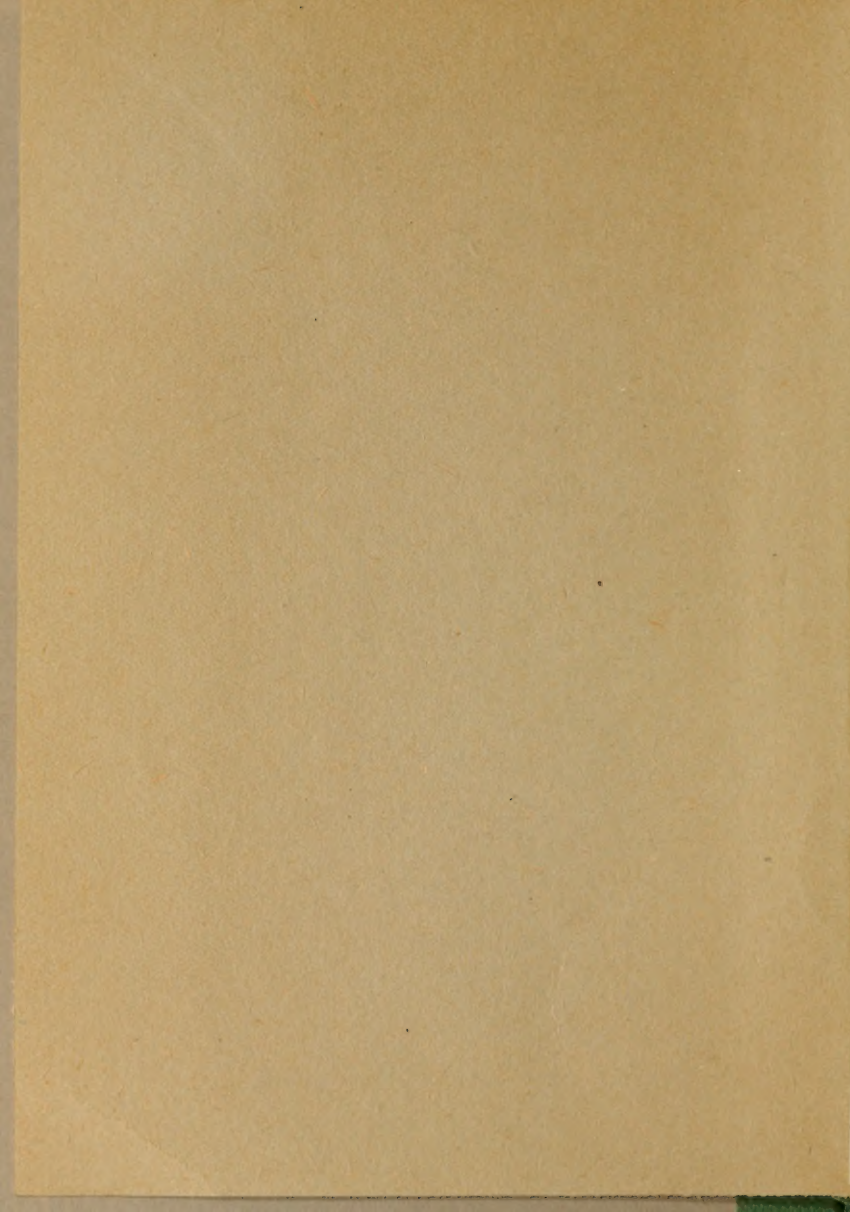


:: V E R S E S ::  
Sacred and Profane. By  
Seumas O'Sullivan. Being  
Number Five of the Tower  
Press Booklets---Second Series



MAUNSEL & CO., Ltd.,  
96 Middle Abbey Street,  
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To  
THE AUTHOR OF  
"SONGS OF A DEVOTEE."



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*Though, late in a too travelled world,  
From no far land our sails are furled  
For harbour, yet perchance, we bring  
Tokens of further wandering,  
For, it may be, our sadder hearts  
Have dealt in more enchanted marts  
Than those old singers, and our eyes  
Have gathered costlier merchandise.  
Witness if in our song there be,  
For that fierce olden ecstasy,  
For that old singing wild and brave,  
Magic of wood and wind and wave,  
For old high thoughts that clashed like swords,  
A wisdom winnowed from light words.*



## EVE AND LILITH

WITH Adam I have mourned for Lilith  
flown,

Yea, walked disconsolate in Paradise  
Through the green ways of Eden unconsolated,  
Though by my side young Eve went wondering  
And whispering with her young grace that  
made

The loveliness of Eden lovelier.  
Till, finding unavailing all her ways  
And each caress, taught by her woman's love,  
That is more subtle than the mind of God,  
She found, devised, and perfected a plan  
Which, brought to full fruition, closed on me  
For evermore, that Eden she abhorred,  
Where my sad heart could have but thought  
of one  
Who walked there in the morning of the  
world.

## SAINT ANTHONY

ALL day Saint Anthony, twixt tear and moan  
Had battled with weak heart, and now almost  
His strength had failed him when the phantom  
host

Suddenly vanished and he was alone.

Half fearing still, he raised from the cold stone  
His head sweat-bathed and weary, and his  
heart

Failed him almost, for by his side one stood  
Lovelier than all the vanished multitude.

No longer he resisted, but stretched up  
Weak hands desirous, wildly thrown apart,  
Past the white limbs, past the round breasts,  
to where

The long and delicate tendrils of light hair  
Caressed, wind-rippled, the brow's ivory.

Then, shrieking, on his face, Saint Anthony  
Fell, for he knew the splendour of that face,  
The eyes, that, full of pity, full of grace,  
Looked on him from the white brow's Sanctity.  
It was the Virgin Mother of his Lord.

Prostrate, half senseless, in his swoon he heard

The voice which sang his infant Lord to rest  
Sound clear through the wild tumult of his  
breast,

“I, too, was beautiful, O Anthony”.

## THE MONK

I go with silent feet and slow  
As all my black-robed brothers go ;  
I dig a while and read and pray,  
So portion out my pious day  
Until the evening time, and then  
Work at my book with cunning pen.  
If she would turn to me a while,  
If she would turn to me and smile,  
My book would be no more to me  
Than some forgotten phantasy,  
And God no more unto my mind  
Than a dead leaf upon the wind.



## CALVARY

SWEETHEART, be brave and face with me

The thing that we have done ;

Lo, in the quiet garden now

He prayeth all alone—

The Lord we have betrayed ; yet we

May go with him to Calvary.

Even now the brutal soldiery,

With lust of slaughter mad,

Wait by the quiet garden, where

He went secure and glad.

Sweetheart, there is sad comfort, see,

Three crosses crown our Calvary.

## WINTER

Why will you plague me with your loveliness?

Can you not see

How vain is every grace and each caress?

Prithee let be.

Your beauty is no less than when we kept

The summer that we knew ;

But it is winter, sweet, you should have slept

The winter through.

For what avail your kisses and your sighs,

The lovely splendour of your tear-bright eyes?

Less than a little wine

Poured out upon the grave

Of some old glad and brave

Dead singer of the vine.

## IN SAECULA SÆCULORUM

DOWN to the grass the chestnuts sway  
A shower of undissolved snow  
With flowery laughter—can they know,  
With every little wind of May  
Their loveliness must drift away ?

O falling blossoms laughing still,  
What secrets have your branches stored  
Deep in your sun-steeped blossoms' hoard,  
That so your wealth of bloom is poured  
Forth to the Sun and the winds' will ?

Lo ! all their branches flash to me  
Their scorn of such a questioning.  
With light, a silvery sound, they sing:  
Our will, is with the will of spring  
And all the years desire ; and we  
Die thus into eternity.

## A PIPER

A PIPER in the streets to-day,  
Set up, and tuned, and started to play,  
And away, away, away on the tide  
Of his music we started ; on every side  
Doors and windows were opened wide,  
And men left down their work and came,  
And women with petticoats coloured like  
flame,  
And little bare feet that were blue with cold,  
Went dancing back to the age of gold,  
And all the world went gay, went gay,  
For half an hour in the street to-day.



## A FIDDLER

ALL day long about the town,  
He had wandered up and down  
From street to street, from drink to drink ;  
At evening he began to think,  
“ Better, far better, to be dead  
Where no thought could find out my head ;  
Lying in some green place apart  
No sorrow could find out my heart ;  
Laid in the quiet there alone  
I should have all my dreams my own ;  
For, though they know not, when I play  
(These fools), I give my dreams away.”

## IN AN IRISH THEATRE

WE are not kingly born :  
Why should we mourn  
The Sons of Usna left companionless,  
Deirdre's sad loveliness ?  
Surely it fits us better to be gay  
In this our little day,  
And singing dance, and flash our midget wings  
Over the surfaces of things,  
Until the sorrow-heavy years return  
Bearing full many a sorrow, many an urn  
Wherein earth's kingliest ones so long have  
slept  
Austere, unwept.  
For it may be when we have danced our  
round  
And known all joys that are above the ground,  
That we too will be taught in some sad  
school  
How to mourn for the kingly and beautiful.

**“JE NE VEUX DE PERSONNE  
AUPRES DE MA TRISTESSE”**

—HENRI DE REGNIER.

**NAY**, sweet, my grief and I, we may not  
brook

**Even** your light footfall, even your shy look,  
**Even** your light hand that touches carelessly  
**The** faded ribbon in the closed-up book.

**Let** be ; my door is closed for this one day,  
**Nor** may morn's freshness through my window  
stray ;

**My** heart is a guest-chamber, and awaits  
**Sorrow**, a sweet shy guest from far away.

**Shyly** it comes from its far distant home,  
**O** keep a silence lest its voice be dumb ;  
**For** every man that lives and laughs and loves  
**Must** hear that whisper when his hour has  
come.

## TO EITHNE

ALL the swift loveliness your girlhood knew  
Is hid away ;  
No longer, unregarded as they flew,  
Your tresses play ;  
Yet there is something in your mien and  
mood  
More gravely gay.

No more a child's distress of tears unshed  
Troubles your mind ;  
No longer, with sweet tears for a flower dead  
Your eyes grow blind ;  
But, sweetheart, there is something in your  
eyes  
More wisely kind.



## DAY AND NIGHT

WHILE still the dusk was magical,  
And night an unknown way,  
I watched the evening shadows fall,  
Impatient of the day.

And now when night's a travelled land,  
Dusk a familiar face,  
I seek from day's departing hand  
A sacramental grace.

## ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD

(From the Japanese.)

NAY, but he is so young, and feet so small  
Must stumble on the way, and he will fall.  
I will go down to him who rules the night  
And say "Lo this I give thee, so thou take  
The little lad upon thy back, and make  
His path over the sunless meadow light."

## A VERSE-EPISTLE

It seems but yesterday since you and I  
On these same rocks, under the self-same sky,  
Lay all day, naked, while the mirrored sun  
Beat on us from the blue, till we grew one  
With all that cloudless world of sea and land:  
Knowing a life we could but understand  
Each through the other's silence: and too wise  
To still with any speech such silences.  
And now there is no blue sky anywhere  
In all the wet gray world, but in the air  
The salt wind stings with sense of storm and  
    death,  
And silence holds the heart and stills the  
    breath.  
Yet in the very silence once again  
I look to you out of a world of men,  
By sorrow grown forgetful of the Spring  
That hides beyond the gray of everything.  
And in the silence I once more have won  
The life we lived together in the sun.  
And thus it is that I have come to know  
There is no way henceforth that we must go—

O friend, I think even when we are dead  
There is no path whatever we can tread,  
But each will find the other by his side  
Within the call of silence, though the tide  
Of Stygian waters dashed on us, and made  
The very ghosts go howling and afraid.  
I know I will remember even as now  
The courage of the heart I knew, the brow  
Bright still with some unrisen sun of hope.  
I will remember these, and I will grope  
Even in the darkness, I will stretch my hand  
And find you there, and we will understand,  
Where silence, such as holds the heaven, keeps  
The solitude of those unsounded deeps.

## TO A POET

I too, with Ireland, loved you long ago  
Because you sang, as none but you could  
sing,

The cause we hold the dearest ; now I know  
How vain your love was, and how mean a  
thing.

And not to you whose heart went anywhere  
Her sorrow's holy heritage belongs :  
You could have made of any other air  
The little careful mouthfuls of your songs.

## COMMUNION

FOR solace of all lonely things  
That have no heed of day or night,  
Beside the poplars, grey and still,  
Beside the poplars still and high,  
Where bats fly whistling in dim light,  
And draw the night on with their wings,  
And dark, unmoving shadows lie  
On paths that know strange visitings,  
I go with will like the wind's will  
For solace of earth-exiled things.

## PESSIMISTS

THE world-fruit withers on the tree  
Since there is none to pluck, for we  
Who walk beneath the burdened boughs  
Go sadly, with earth-bending brows  
Saying "In some age of old  
These branches bowed with living gold."  
Saying "Earth's latest fruit is shed  
And all her sweetness harvested."  
And only when some golden gift  
Falls at our very feet, we lift  
Our heads awhile and, sighing, say  
"How strangely in earth's memory stay  
These quaint half-hidden things that hold  
Something of the age of gold."



## POPLARS

SURELY no lovelier forms their shadowy  
kingdom owns

Than these tall poplars bending, swaying,  
each upon

Its own light shadow, even as those unbodied  
ones

Swaying in some sad dance by shady  
Acheron.

## SONNETS



## VIRGINIBUS PUERISQUE

FAIR maids ye are, but queens by beauty's  
right,

And with your years your sovereignty decays;  
Then think upon the errors of your ways,  
O think, ye maids, while yet your eyes are  
bright

And shine elate with that high conquering  
light,

That ye will surely come on darker days,  
As dew caught lingering by the morning rays,  
As fleetest day that's clipt by surly night.

And you, poor fool, that waste your breath  
in sighs,

Mouse-hearted lover, lift your head and laugh,  
Lift up your head and list to me, and quaff  
This toast I give "To any lady's eyes."

For one bee wanting who will burn the hive?  
And beauty is a sea where all may dive.

## A POET

THE music of the bending river reed  
That hears the whisper of the wind of  
Spring  
Was in his song ; you would have thought  
indeed  
That Pan himself had taught him how to  
sing.  
But he had wisdom Pan could never teach,  
Nor any Faun or Satyr ever knew,  
A sorrow and a joy beyond the reach  
Of any one of all their heartless crew.  
He sang the joy of boyhood's careless day,  
And all the sweet distress of maidenhood,  
And knowledge proved in every lightest lay  
Of things whereon the hearts of poets brood ;  
And strong he was to wrestle with and throw  
The fear no deathless thing can ever know.

GLASNEVIN, OCTOBER 9TH, 1904

THEY peer about his grave with curious eyes,  
And for his sin they pity him, their chief,  
With miserable mockery of grief ;  
Beyond their littleness serene he lies,  
Nor heeds the insult of their sympathies,  
This man pre-eminent by strong belief  
In his own heart—a little while, for brief  
The resting-time is when a hero dies.

Near to God's heart by greatness of thy heart,  
And nearer by thy sin, O strong of will !  
Send out thy spirit like a sword and kill  
Their littleness ; no longer dwell apart ;  
Send forth thy spirit like a flame, and burn  
Through these a pathway for thy soul's return.

## TO A GREEK POET

O HAPPY hearted singer of a day  
So golden that its very memory  
Can stir the heart to sing its ecstasy,  
A rivulet to the ocean of your lay.  
O heart of golden fire, could you not stay  
This leaden age that never more will see  
White Aphrodite's naked majesty  
Gleam suddenly out of the white sea spray,  
Or Bacchus laughing through his wine-wet  
hair?

For chastity that wont to dwell apart  
Timid and veiled, seeks now no hidden place,  
But like a strumpet certain of her art  
Shows in the daylight unashamed her face,  
And Love your Lord is crownless everywhere.



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